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24 February 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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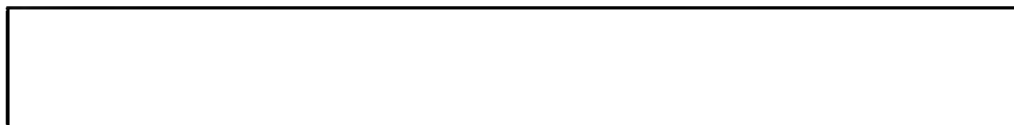
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*Vietnam: General Khanh appears to be resigned to leaving South Vietnam in his new capacity as "roving ambassador."

Talking to reporters in Dalat yesterday, Khanh seemed relaxed but resentful of the way in which he had been removed as commander-in-chief. He implied that his services might again be needed in South Vietnam "at some point."

There are indications that the Buddhist leaders are assessing recent developments in Saigon and are apprehensive that Khanh's ouster may have anti-Buddhist overtones. Addressing followers in Saigon yesterday, Buddhist monk Tam Chau made no direct reference to Khanh, stated that the Buddhists are opposed to any coup d'etat, but added they will support the present government.

Press accounts of the meeting quote Tam Chau as calling for an end to the fighting, similar to remarks allegedly made by Tri Quang to a reporter last week. US military sources noted only that Chau commented that supporters of Communism should go to North Vietnam and that supporters of freedom should stay in the South.

[Colonel Pham Ngoc Thao, organizer of the initial 19 February coup attempt against Khanh, may be hiding in the vicinity of Saigon, [redacted] Thao is apparently trying to get word to General Khiem, ambassador to the US, that many circles credit Khiem]

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[with Khanh's eventual ouster and that some pro-Khiem forces are still intact and unexposed by the coup's failure. Khiem probably has tacit supporters in Saigon although Thao may be exaggerating the extent of support he had lined up for the coup.]

Viet Cong activity continues to pick up throughout the country, most notably in the southern provinces where some drop in intensity was reported last week. In central Vietnam, extended fighting has been reported about midway along the main road linking the II Corps command in Pleiku with its supply depots at Qui Nhon on the coast. Although periodic upswings of Viet Cong activity have been observed as a past pattern, the present gradual step up may reflect Communist efforts to take advantage of the latest political upheavals in Saigon.

No unusual movement of Chinese Communist or North Vietnamese armed forces has been detected in the past 24 hours. [redacted]

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Continued Soviet caution in handling the Vietnam crisis is reflected in Mikoyan's 23 February remarks at a reception for Finnish President Kekkonen. According to a TASS report, Mikoyan confined himself to a reiteration of support for the Geneva agreements and stressed the need to prevent a wider military conflict in Southeast Asia. He took much the same line in his response to Cambodia's 11 February report asking the USSR to intercede with the US and Britain for an immediate convening of a Geneva conference. [redacted]

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Africa: Two leading moderate African states are separately promoting military aid to the Congo by African countries [acceptable] to the Leopoldville government.

grindly

Ivory Coast President Houphouet-Boigny is trying to bring this about through the new 13-member African and Malagasy Common Organization (OCAM), created by French-speaking African moderates at a conference in Mauritania earlier this month.

Houphouet told the US chargé in Abidjan on 20 February that Leopoldville and OCAM members agree that Congo should join the organization as soon as possible. This, he believes, would allow the other members to send military and civilian personnel to Leopoldville as an "internal matter" and thus bypass the continent-wide Organization of African Unity (OAU) in which the radicals are strong.

According to Houphouet, who was the driving force behind OCAM's formation, France and the US would be asked to supply arms for the troops. Brussels has already been asked to help arrange OCAM membership for the Congo, but evidently feels that "considerable preparation" is necessary first.

In the past, France has discouraged involvement in Congo affairs by its African protégés. Moreover, Congolese officials, notably President Kasavubu and army chief Mobutu, have opposed calling on other Africans for help.

(continued)

Meanwhile, Nigeria evidently intends to press for a resolution, at the OAU foreign ministers' meeting beginning in Nairobi on 26 February, authorizing individual African states to provide military aid at Leopoldville's request. Since the OCAM countries voiced support for Leopoldville at their recent conference, some Nigerian officials involved in the Congo problem have indicated their belief that such a resolution has "at least a fighting chance." A similar proposal was only narrowly beaten last September. [REDACTED]

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NOTE

*Sudan: The non-Communists in Khartoum yesterday abandoned their attempts to reach a compromise with the leftists and unilaterally announced the formation of a new cabinet dominated by the Ansar brotherhood and the urban National Union Party. Although one portfolio has been left vacant for the Communists and three for the leftist People's Democratic Party, these groups have not agreed to participate and have already called protest demonstrations. The leftists will probably attempt to provoke widespread violence, but probably lack a capability to overthrow the new government at this time.

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